

The Old Field School

By FRANK M. VANCE.

Here, 'mid nature's wild and rugged scenes,
With no inviting prospects to adorn,
The latent spark of genius brightened forth—
The greatest lives in history were born.

Backward, far backward, in the dim vistas of bygone years, there is no dearer or more revered spot in memory than that of our early school days. To most of those of advanced years these scenes were enacted amid the primeval shades of the "Old Field School House." This pioneer landmark was conveniently situated upon some country thoroughfare within a grove of natural forest trees, and, if possible, in proximity to a spring of water. The district, of which this rural temple of learning was the nucleus, included an irregular area of twenty or thirty square miles in extent, and embraced an isolated population of from forty to sixty children of school age.

The present system of free schools was unknown in those days. All terms of school were organized and conducted upon the subscription plan, that is, the patrons subscribed to an article of agreement with a teacher for a certain number of pupils at a stated rate of tuition per scholar, and paid therefor out of their own pockets at the close of the term. Board for the teacher was generally included, whereby it became necessary for him to "board round," visiting each patron with a frequency proportionate to the number of pupils sent by him to school. These perambulating sojourns were often very onerous to the schoolmaster, as they frequently took him miles away from the seat of his labors, where, in exceedingly cold weather, his early presence was necessary to have the room comfortable. They were, also, not conducive to preparatory study, nor always rewarded by that quality of diet satisfactory to one engaged in sedentary occupation.

The school building, erected by the volunteer labor of the citizens of the district, was made of logs from the adjacent forest, or hand-made brick, and seldom exceeded in dimension twenty-five or thirty feet square. The furnishings of the room were wholly the handiwork of the amateur mechanics of the neighborhood, and consisted of two or three stout wall-tables some three feet wide and ten feet long, used for writing, and upon which were placed the divers "sack buckets and baskets, and a wotley array of sundry wearing apparel not convenient to hang upon the wooden pegs that ornamented all the vacant spaces between the one door and the four little windows of the building.

The seats for the pupils were rough benches of various heights and lengths, made from slabs, and placed parallel to the sides of the room—the lower ones for the smaller pupils in the interior—leaving a central rectangle, at one end of which was a wide-open fireplace and at the other, the ink-bespattered desk of the teacher. There was not a semblance of a blackboard or wall map; and the only decoration, aside from the gauzy network of the geometrical spider at the corners of the ceiling, were the hieroglyphics of "keel" and charcoal urchins.

School was called by the loud rappings of the teacher upon the window sash, and the entrance of the throng of knowledge seekers to the room was characterized by an indiscriminate rush for the more desirable seats. It was strictly a case of "first come, first serve," and everywhere there might be observed animated bejives of both sexes in comsious and hilarious enjoyment. Nothing but the most flagrant violation of decorum was noticed by the instructor, and the rod ferule were the panacea for all severe offenses. Pupils came into the school at all hours of the day and questions asked; and seldom did a teacher rebuke the social communications and sly mischievousness of the young tyro. But wilful misdeeds and serious disturbances were common, and the severest chastisements were promptly inflicted. There was no schoolboard to which appeal for assistance in subduing a unruly, and the tutor was truly monarch of all he surveyed, and vernal and controlled the infant public or abdicated the realm. The quest for supremacy between the teacher and the combined force of orderly boys was often spirited 1 sometimes tragical.

"Liken and larnen" were considered indissolubly allied in the Old Field School of antebellum days, and corporal punishment was an every occurrence. A bunch of strong liches was always kept in store, and it was one of the funnest of sks of the bad boy to discover ase instruments of torture and enle them with a sharp knife, which he unseemly caused them to fly into merous places when applied. A lesser punishment was to stand on the floor, which was sometimes ensified by being required to hold t a book until the arm became ai-paralyzed. A very frequent and et reprehensible correction was a eruel application of the ferule

or ruler to the inside of the hand. The three R's—Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic, were the chief stules, of no practical importance, and were pursued only by an occasional student of mature years. Outside of spelling and reading there were no regular classes, owing to the great disparity in attainments and diversity of text books. Nearly every publication extant was represented by the students of reading, from the backless Testament to the last year's almanac. Most every one had a copy of Webster's bluebacked speller, which was also used for a reader in the more elementary grades. Others more advanced read from Bible, the Columbian Speaker, and the lives of Washington and Jackson. Fragmentary editions of the Revised Statutes were also to be seen. The copies of arithmetic most in evidence were those of Deboe, Pike and Ray. Slates of elaborate dimensions were exclusively used, and many ciphered out the intricate problems in "Tare and Tret," with bits of soapstone for pencils, gathered from the banks of neighboring streams.

As there is supposed to be a time to or for all things, so there was a time in the Old Field School set apart exclusively for writing. The copy book was a home product, made from the blue fool's cap paper, and the pens were fashioned from goose quills, under the skilful hand of the teacher. Copies were set suitable to the various capacities of the pupils, and ranged in character all the way from the initiatory step of "Pot-hooks," to that of "Many men of many minds." The writing class sat before the ponderous table facing the wall, and the only time of the day's session in school in which there was an approximation to quietness in the room was the half hour devoted to writing broken only by the musical squeak of two dozen goose quill pens.

The study of spelling was made very prominent and the recitations were always oral. The classes lined up in a long row, and the words of the lesson were pronounced to each pupil in turn. When a word was misspelled, the pupil below who spelled it correctly took his place above the one who missed it, and the pupil standing at the head of the class at the close of the recitation was given a head mark, and took his place next day at the foot of the class. The pupil obtaining the greatest number of head marks during the term of school was given a premium at the close. Then there were spelling matches in the evening—a season of unbridled fun and frolic. Two captains were designated, who "chose up," and the house was divided, as nearly every one spelt, and a battle royal raged for supremacy. The most exciting time came when both sides stood up and "spelled down"—each contestant sitting down on missing a word. This contest was often prolonged, for there were good spellers at that time, and it frequently happened that some diminutive pupil—most generally a little girl—would hold a half-dozen stalwart opponents in check, and oftentimes come off victorious.

A prominent incident, ever connected with a winter term of school, and one which was looked forward to as a red-letter day, was the "Christmas Treat." It was an unwritten law, sanctioned by universal custom, that the teacher must give to the pupils of the school not only a holiday on Christmas, but also a bountiful repast of apples, or cakes and candy. Very often this demand was positively refused, and then came the dangerous sport of "turning the teacher out and making him treat." To accomplish this, the schoolroom, in his temporary absence, was securely barricaded, so as to prevent ingress, while a force of the largest boys remained on the outside to guard against the possibility of entrance or the escape of the teacher from the premises. The penalty of a noncompliance was a ducking in some nearby stream or pond of water, the icy nature of which usually enforced a tardy and sullen compliance.

The recreative sports and amusements of the old country schools were many and varied in character. The boys mostly engaged in what were termed "Town ball," "Mumble peg," and "Roly poly," while the girls played "Puss wants her corner," "Jumping the rope," "Ante over," "Ring round rosy," and other more quiet games. Jumping, foot racing and "blackman" were also favorite pastimes of the boys; and skating, coasting and snow balling were highly enjoyed in midwinter. Attending all these were innumerable little joyous pleasures of youthful associations that have passed with the age of the olden times. "The grape vine swing is ruined," and bright-eyed boys and girls no longer, as of yore, troop the sylvan shades in nutting parties, search for wild strawberries in the meadows, or ramble beside the icy-fettered brook in early springtime, bedecked with nature's earliest floral offerings of "Johnny jump ups," and pendent blue bells. The cherished, balcony scenes come back to us, but only upon the silent, mystic wings of memory.

Women Run Many Hotels.
Many of the hotels of the country towns of England are managed by women, and it is claimed that they do it far better than men in the same position.

Moderation.
The moderation of fortunate people comes from the calm which good fortune gives to their tempers.

PUT TO TEST SLAYER KILLS SELF

Conscience Stricken, Says He Sees Gun with Which He Killed "Sweet Blood."

FOUND IT WAS ONLY RUST.

Guilty Man Cut His Throat—Trembling Arkansas Negro Juror Demands the Test, Because "Voodoo Never Lies."

Little Rock, Ark.—Tried by an old "voodoo" ordeal, Louis Hursh's inexorable conscience convicted him of a cowardly murder.

Hursh was his own executioner. Ashen-faced, quivering from fear, he cut his throat so desperately that he died without a groan.

Such a tragedy could be enacted only in a community as ignorant as superstitions. Sam Haywood lived on "Dock" Wooden's place, four miles north of Baxter, Drew County, in southeast Arkansas. Haywood, his wife and their brood were about going to bed when he was called to the door of his cabin.

He opened the door—a flash, a report and a load of shot tore Haywood's left breast. He fell on his face, stone dead. His wife, close behind Haywood, saw a man retreating backward through the gate a few feet away, but in the darkness she could not see his face.

News of the murder was telephoned to Monticello, the county seat; Justice of the Peace Henry Lewis, Deputy Sheriff Tom Biggs and a couple of officers rode fast to Haywood's cabin. That the Justice might hold an inquest the officers assembled a jury and in that sparsely settled country some negroes had to be sworn as jurors.

No direct clue to Haywood's assassin could be produced, but a report was afloat that Haywood and Lewis Hursh had met and quarrelled at Dermott, a hamlet near Baxter. So Tom Biggs arrested Hursh and took him before the Justice. Hursh's family swore to a perfect alibi for him; swore positively he returned home from Dermott and did not go out again.

There was not a particle of evidence of Hursh's guilt; the jury was about to bring in a verdict of "death at the hands of an unknown party." A negro juror, shaken probably by the memory of frightful scenes he had witnessed or which had been described to him, said:

"Judge, Your Honor, sub, a man can swear to tell the truth and lie. But the voodoo test never tells a lie. I know when it told the truth twice and my granmammy and her granmammy knew when it often made men liars—the men are dead—when they was in Loo'isana. Judge, Your Honor, sub, this man here's suspected of putting a load of shot in Mister Haywood. Nobody saw it. If you want to know the truth, sub, if you want to know if this man put a load of shot in Mister Haywood, sub, bring this man's shotgun here, load it and fire it.

"If he killed Mister Haywood, sub, the gun will sweat blood, just as sure as the devil is after us all—I've seen it—sub—I've seen it—sweat blood—It's voodoo!"

Scarcely able to articulate, shaking as if in a convulsion, the juror sank to the log where he had sat. His fellow negroes on the jury chorused: "Try him by voodoo, Judge, Your Honor, sub. Voodoo never lies."

Incredulous, of course, only to gratify his jurors Justice Lewis said to the deputy sheriff:

"Go ahead, Tom."

Biggs found that Hursh's shotgun was loaded. He fired it in the air; then, with it at his shoulder still, turned its muzzle toward Hursh.

Its barrel glistened as clean as a hound's tooth, but on the very top of the muzzle flecks of rust, which Hursh could never have seen before, shone red in the sunlight.

"It leaks blood!" he yelled in unearthly tone. He dashed into a log chicken house, whipped out his knife and cut his throat before the deputy sheriff could jump through the door.

Peppermint Farms.
Kalamazoo, Mich.—The world's peppermint is grown on peppermint farms in the neighborhood of this city. Over 300,000 pounds of peppermint oil, worth \$5 a pound, is produced annually from the moist and ink black soil of southwestern Michigan.

Peppermint farming is simple. The roots are planted in the spring; the bushes, which are about three feet high, are cut down in the late summer; the stilling goes on through August and September.

An acre yields about twenty-five pounds of oil. The cost of this production—planting, weeding, stilling—is about \$15. The oil itself brings \$125. Thus every acre of a peppermint farm gives a profit of \$110.

Cresote on Bacon.
Baltimore, Md.—The State Board of Health stated that a large portion of the bacon sold is covered with a preparation of cresote, which has been used as a substitute for the smokehouse. It is asserted that the preparation saves the packers from placing the bacon in the smokehouse for the three or four days necessary.

WOMEN OVERDO IT

WE ARE BECOMING A PEOPLE OF HARD-RIDDEN FADS.

One of the Chief Dangers of the Age—Too Many Theories of Life—The Food Faddist at Fault.

By Roxanna Queen.

"That poor child was washed into heaven," said a witty woman when hearing of the death of a friend's young daughter. "The mother was a believer in cleanliness and little Susanne was the victim."

"The youngster was always put in the tub morning, noon, and night, and many is the day I've known her to have four or five baths. She was a peaky little thing, sick half the time, but the doctors could not make her mother realize that keeping the pores open did not mean an orgy of bathing."

The chief danger of the age is overdoing. We have so many theories of life that often we are worse off than without any. An overdose benefit is like an overcooked steak; the best is lost.

Few of us realize the distinction between a good thing and a too good thing, which is one cause that we are becoming a people of hard-ridden fads.

The woman who is too fat is told to reduce. Now, reducing is all right, but rapid flesh shedding is a disease breeder. To reduce in moderation is well; to live for reducing is a virtue overdone.

Perhaps our fat friend is told to exercise. Does she go in for a brisk walk twice a day and gentle calisthenics morning and evening? Not she. She walks until she is ready to drop with fatigue, and bends, turns and twists like an aspiring contortionist until she loses her good looks and good health along with her flesh.

If dieting is the order she draws no line between starving and prudent eating; wrinkles and dyspepsia follow.

A lengthened waistline usually means a belt dropped almost to her knees in front and a figure that is a caricature in its shortness of legs. The food faddist is in special need of learning that well done is not overdone. Who has not been pestered with friends who, being told that the hot water cure is the last thing in cure-alls, treat themselves like the tank of a locomotive, or who sneer at beef-eaters when they become nipped with vegetarianism.

It is well to bring up children carefully, it is overdoing to bring them up so carefully that their young lives are made miserable by rules and regulations, and they are robbed of childhood's heritage of romping.

The successes in life are not always the boys and girls whose parents have advanced ideas in child-rearing. Perfection forced into too close range has a way of getting distorted.

A mother with ultra views of decorum was horrified to see her 15-year-old daughter smoke a cigarette and dance a skirt dance for the amusement of her friends the first time she went unchaperoned. The girl explained that was like a dervish running amuck from an overdose of goodness.

The sanitariums are full because women do not seem able to learn that to work is well; to overwork is nervous prostration.

Tell an indiscriminating woman that the polite hostess is never inattentive to her guests, and that is the house where the guest feels like shrieking "For heaven's sake give me a minute alone!" There's nothing more tiresome than overdone hospitality.

The crank is usually the person who overrides a good idea.

To make pleasant remarks means popularity; to always make pleasant remarks is sycophancy or insincerity.

Solid reading is good; never to read anything in lighter vein is to have a brain with as few high lights as a silhouette.

To learn that well done is not overdone is the surest safeguard against life's excesses. Moderation may not be exciting, but it wears well.

Queens Who Smoke.

Somehow it seems unimagable that Queen Alexandra or the German Empress or the Queen of Rumania should have taken to the "cigarette habit," to which most of the younger consorts of European rulers confess. Yet Carmen Sylva is on a list of "Queens who smoke" which has just been published, and explains that she has never yet put a poetic thought into writing without that best of nerve soothers, the cigarette, between her lips. The Dowager Empress of Russia, Queen Amelia of Portugal and the Dowager Queen of Spain are also among the smokers, and, of the younger generation, the Empress of Russia, who had never smoked a cigarette before her marriage, is now probably the one whose daily allowance of cigarettes is the largest. But, then, "ladies' cigarettes" in Russia are of the mildest kind—almost as mild as chocolate imitations.

To Protect Hard Wood Floors.
To protect hardwood floors from scratches, fit corrugated rubber to bottom of tables and chairs, fasten with strong glue. These tips are in visible.

SAW HER DEAD SON DIDN'T KNOW HIM

Watched Body, with Never a Thought that Crushed Boy Was Hers

IDENTIFIED BY HIS SCHOOL BOOKS

Lad Killed by a Trolley Car on Way Home, and Mother Innocently Joined the Curious Throng and Saw Mangled Remains Removed.

Brooklyn, N. Y.—Little dreaming that it was her son who had been killed, Mrs. Lawrence Schiller, of No. 43 Throop avenue, Williamsburg, joined a crowd of several thousand persons that gathered around a trolley car of the Union avenue line under which the body of the boy was pinned.

The accident took place on Throop avenue, near the Schiller home and Mrs. Schiller saw hundreds of shoppers hurrying to the scene. She followed and had just reached the car when an ambulance arrived from the Williamsburg Hospital bringing Dr. Hurley.

Dr. Hurley crawled under the car to where the body of the boy lay so terribly crushed under the rear trucks that he could not be identified. Mrs. Schiller saw the doctor crawl from under the car and heard him say:

"The poor little fellow is dead—I think he was a schoolboy."

Still Mrs. Schiller had no idea the trolley victim was her son and she waited with the crowd until a wrecking crew arrived to lift the car and free the body. She turned away as she saw men lifting the limp body from under the rear trucks. The wreckers found several school books scattered over the ground and these were picked up and put in the ambulance. The body was then taken to the hospital.

Mrs. Schiller started for her home when a school mate of her son overtook her and thrust a school book into her hands. The school book had been overlooked by the wrecking crew and the boy explained that he had found it between the car tracks.

Instantly Mrs. Schiller identified the book and it came to her like a flash that her son Lawrence, a pupil in Public School No. 33, had been killed. The unhappy woman ran to the Clymer avenue police station, praying she might be mistaken. She arrived at the station house as a policeman was bringing in from the hospital the other school books which had been found beside the body. Mrs. Schiller fainted. She was taken home and is in a serious condition.

Lawrence Schiller was eight years old, and was killed while on his way home from school, where he was at the head of his class. The boy tried to run across the street in front of the car, but was struck, knocked down and ground under the wheels.

FOOTBALL WORTH MANY LIVES.

Necessary to Face Real Peril to Develop Manly Courage.

New Haven, Conn.—The Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott when addressing Yale students in Battell Chapel, said he was glad that men were not puppets even if the strings were to be pulled by God.

"I do not know enough about football to say whether there are too many injuries and deaths from the game or not," said Dr. Abbott, "but it is necessary to face real peril in order to develop manly courage, and so this development is worth all that it costs."

"The end of life is not the building of railroads and skyscrapers. It is the development of manly men and womanly women."

"I am glad I live in a world where I can be lawless if I want to, for I can also be virtuous. It is better that there should be wickedness, crime and misery than there should be only puppets."

World's Work in Incompetent Hands.

Chicago.—The Rev. Frank Crane, formerly of this city, now of Worcester, Mass., told students at the Chicago University, that the rank and file of every profession, students, teachers, mothers, preachers, actors, all come under his ban. He says only a meagre 5 per cent. ever do the work required of them. And with the students the percentage sinks in an appalling manner—to a bare and lonely 1 per cent.

"The great work of the world is left to the hands of incompetents. And this unfitness extends to all walks of life."

"Nineteen out of every twenty mothers are unfit to rear their children."

"Nineteen out of every twenty preachers fail to deliver their message."

New Yorkers Favor Insurance.

New York.—According to the records one person out of eighteen in this city is carrying some life insurance.

Unchivalrous Suggestion.

Women like to jest about there being no men in heaven, but they know well enough that if there were no men there it wouldn't be heaven for them.

GAME RABBIT KILLS TURKEY.

Bunny Resents Attack on Rooster and Breaks Gobbler's Neck by a Fierce Kick.

West Caldwell, N. J.—In a fierce encounter between a large pet rabbit, fighting to save the life of a rooster which had been its nearest and best friend for months, and a savage turkey gobbler on Josiah Wertz's farm, near here, the rabbit kicked the life out of the gobbler before the farmer could save it. The first blow of the strong hind legs of the rabbit ripped open the breast and drew of the turkey and a second blow cut its throat. After sparring a few minutes the rabbit planted a terrific kick on the side of the turkey's neck, breaking it. The turkey fell dead when Wertz, who had no idea a rabbit could fight so fiercely, was only a few feet away and hurrying to the rescue.

The name of the rabbit is Pinky. It has no mate on the farm. Being lonely, it made friends with the chickens and became the chum of Pilgrim Father, a large Plymouth Rock rooster. Day after day they went about the farmyard together, one nibbling and the other pecking.

Pilgrim Father scratched up a fat worm and then the rooster stood over it, clucking and calling the hens to the feast. The turkey gobbler rushed in and swallowed the worm. That made Pilgrim Father angry and it spurred the gobbler and soon a fight was on. The gobbler knocked Pilgrim Father over once or twice. Pinky kept circling around, eager to help its friend, but apparently not knowing just how to do it. Finally the gobbler committed the indiscretion of pecking Pinky.

That made the rabbit wild with rage. It began drumming on the ground with its hind legs. Suddenly it shifted the drumming to the turkey. The long sharp claws first ripped open the gobbler's breast. Then they cut a big gash in the throat, and the fight ended when the gobbler keeled over dead with its neck broken.

HERO OF FOREST FIRE RETIRED

Engineer Years Ago Took Passengers Through Flames to Water.

Washburn, Wis.—"Jim" Root, oldest engineer on the Northern Pacific Railway system, has ben laid off, but, although he has ceased to work, he will continue to draw his pay as if he was running an engine. He is now 73 years old.

Root won fame for his heroic deed in saving the passengers on his train from being roasted alive when they were caught at Hinckley in a forest fire years ago. He was running a train between Duluth and St. Paul. He ran his engine to Hinckley, which was found to be in ashes. Suddenly, the winds fanned the forest fires and the train was surrounded by flames. Root stuck to the throttle while the fireman dipped water from the engine's tank and threw it on him and on the cab to keep them from burning.

The smoke was suffocating and the heat terrific, but the members of the crew stayed at their posts until the train reached Skunk Creek, where all escaped to the water and were saved.

Jewels in Goose's Gizzard.

Beloit, Wis.—"This is the goose that laid the golden egg," said Mrs. Dunward Cornelius, No. 852 Highland avenue, to her little daughter Theresa as she was preparing a goose for dinner.

"Mamma, let me take the gizzard to look for the gold," pleaded the little girl.

She dissected the portion which her mother gave her, and to every one's astonishment found two diamonds worth about \$12 each and a piece of gold, evidently from a setting.

One Way of Stopping a Toothache.

Waukegan, Ill.—John Scrackades of South avenue, successfully shot an aching tooth out of his jaw in a novel manner.

He first made a loop of wire around the tooth and then another loop at the other end of the wire, which he placed at the end of the revolver barrel. The bullet, on being fired, struck the wired loop and jerked the tooth out.

Color Line in Kansas Schools.

Topeka, Kan.—Cities of Kansas may provide separate schools for white and negro children in the grades below the high school, but the schools for negro children must have equal facilities and be as easy as those provided for white children. This is a decision of the State Supreme Court.

New York's Traction Fatalities.

New York City.—The traction roads in the City of New York kill about 350 persons a year and injure between 2,000 and 3,000, paying for doing it more than they pay for fuel with which to run the engines that furnish the power for the cars.

Gotham Saving Money.

New York City.—There is evidently money in New York city for every sort of an honest, legitimate investment, for there is \$1.35 going into the savings banks for each \$1 taken out.

Old Lake Bed for Battery.

Honolulu, Hawaii.—It is reported here that the army engineers have fixed upon a subterranean chamber or lake, as the proposed location of the battery at Waikiki.